

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

IT'S TIME TO *REALLY* BRING THE UN AND NATO INTO IRAQ

"We need to call on the strength of our diplomacy to overcome prewar disagreements with allies and reach a new consensus on how to ensure that Iraq emerges as a peaceful and stable nation. We may need a new United Nations Security Council resolution..."

-- Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, July 29, 2003

"...the fundamental point is here we cannot afford to lose here. The future of the Middle East is at stake here and we need to do whatever is necessary. In any situation like this you learn and you make adjustments." -- Senator John McCain, August 20, 2003

Dear Colleague:

This week's attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad only underscores the fact that the international community has an enormous stake in restoring order and encouraging democracy in Iraq. Those who seek to destabilize Iraq recognize that, and make no distinction between the US and the international community. Neither should we.

Congress authorized the use of the US military against Iraq to enforce UN resolutions calling on Saddam Hussein to disarm, and the Administration continues to point to these UN resolutions as part of its justification for the war. Yet since the toppling of Saddam's regime, the Administration has resisted letting the international community – and specifically, the UN – contribute significantly to the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq. So the US continues to enforce UN resolutions against Iraq almost single-handedly, at a steep price in blood and treasure – an average of one American death a day and approximately one billion in US taxpayer dollars a week. Almost as many Americans have lost their lives since the President declared major combat over as died in the initial invasion of Iraq.

It doesn't have to be this way. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush dealt with the threat from Iraq by working with the international community through the UN. Other countries – including France, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia – contributed 160,000 troops. Our allies picked up almost 90 percent of the bill (the total cost of the Gulf War to US taxpayers was roughly what we are now spending *each month* in Iraq).

Senators Lugar and McCain are right, and today's news that the Administration will request greater support from the UN is welcome. However, the Administration should seek to fully internationalize the situation, not just hoist a UN flag over the US troops in Iraq. Other countries are willing to provide additional troops, but only if the UN is given a significant role. And NATO, with its well-coordinated military structure, should help lead the security effort. When Congress returns in September, we will introduce a resolution calling on the White House to seek greater UN and NATO participation in Iraq. Both organizations have extensive experience in peacekeeping and nation-building, and should be called upon to help stabilize the country. After all, if the world was made a better place by the removal of Saddam, then the world should share the burden and cost of ensuring his kind will never be seen again in Iraq.

To sign on to the resolution, or if you have any questions, please contact Cliff Stammerman in Congressman Delahunt's office at 5-3111.

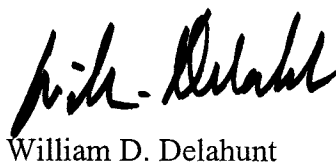
Sincerely,



Neil Abercrombie



Rahm Emanuel



William D. Delahunt



Joseph M. Hoefle